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Washington, DC 20515-6015

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September 14, 2010

The Honorable David Obey
Chairman, House Committee on Appropriations
H-218 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey:

We are writing to express our mounting concern over the lack of a roadmap for the completion of the fiscal year 2011 Appropriations bills and the composition of any prospective Continuing Resolution (CR).

We remain extremely disappointed by the lack of progress on the twelve annual spending bills for the new fiscal year that begins in less than three weeks. To date, only two spending bills have cleared Full Committee and passed the House. It appears that Full Committee and House consideration of the ten remaining unfinished spending bills is highly unlikely in the coming weeks.

The failure by the Committee to complete its work on regular Appropriations bills, combined with the failure of the Democrat leadership to produce even a basic budget blueprint for this and upcoming years, is yet one more signal that the present Democrat leadership in Congress is either unable or unwilling to fulfill its obligation to produce a federal budget in a responsible, timely fashion. This inaction is an extraordinarily perilous signal to be sending to our country at a time of record unemployment, historic levels of deficits and debt, and great economic uncertainty.

While we would much prefer spending the month of September debating individual Appropriations bills, we recognize that a CR will be necessary to avoid a government shut-down at month's end. With less than three weeks before the beginning of the new fiscal year, and in the absence of any enacted fiscal year 2011 Appropriations bills, it appears that your strategy for

this year's Appropriations process is to simply run out the clock and quickly pass a CR to maintain government operations until after the November elections.

Based upon media reports and ongoing dialogue with government agencies, we have serious and growing concerns about the process and composition of any potential CR. Our understanding is that the Obama Administration is requesting a number of new legislative and spending items that have not passed either body and should not, under any circumstances, be included on legislation intended solely to maintain current government operations at the minimal level necessary. At a time of extreme spending and political fatigue, it is simply unacceptable to use a must-pass CR as a legislative vehicle for more wasteful federal spending or completing an array of unfinished political business before the election.

For example, the Administration has proposed that the CR continue the failed policies of the "stimulus" bill. The proposal includes provisions to allow as much as \$10 billion in unused stimulus money to continue to be spent next year instead of returning it to the Treasury for deficit reduction, and provisions costing over \$1.1 billion to allow the Department of Health and Human Services and the Social Security Administration to convert "temporary" one-time stimulus programs into permanent increases in federal spending.

It also appears that the Administration is attempting an end-run around the traditional appropriations process by requesting that the CR adopt selected policy changes and funding increases included in the President's fiscal year 2011 budget request for favored programs. For example, the Administration has proposed that the CR provide significant increased spending over the current level for the following: Pell Grants for next year, a \$1.9 billion increase for new Race to the Top grants, \$250 million increase for new and expanded programs to implement the health care bill, \$624 million increase for programs related to the unratified START Treaty, and over a \$100 million increase for new staff and programs related to the Wall Street Reform bill. Irrespective of the relative merits of these programs, none of these increases are necessary to maintain the current level of government operations during the period of the CR, and therefore simply do not belong in a CR. Instead, decisions on increases for programs should be decided through the regular process where such increases can be weighed against reductions in other programs.

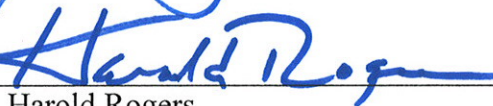
Finally, we are concerned that the Administration is proposing that the CR be used as a catch-all bill to carry expensive and controversial legislation that has not otherwise been able to garner the approval of Congress. For example, the Administration has proposed that the CR include language related to a bailout of the US Postal Service at a cost to the taxpayer of as much as \$5.5 billion, and a controversial reauthorization of certain Community College programs. The CR should not be used as a vehicle to carry unrelated items in an attempt to circumvent the regular legislative process and avoid offsetting the costs of such legislation.

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Under this emerging scenario, we want to make our position abundantly clear: we will not support efforts to pass a CR that contains any unnecessary spending or legislative provisions unrelated to maintaining government operations. We respectfully request that you fashion a CR true to the purpose of temporarily continuing the activities of government at the absolute minimum level necessary until we finish our work on the fiscal year 2011 spending bills. In fact, we believe that we should work together now to cut spending unrelated to defense, veterans and homeland security to the fiscal year 2008 level. We remain ready to work with you to complete this critically important work.

Sincerely,



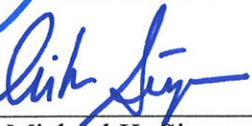
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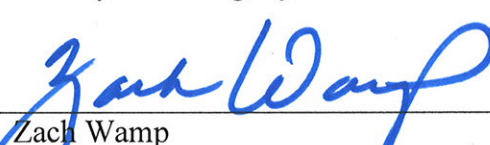
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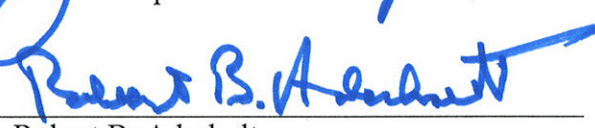
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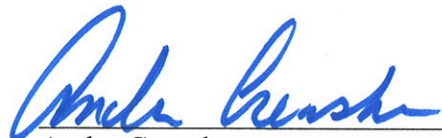
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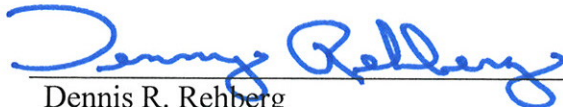
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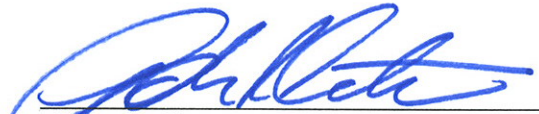
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